

Journal
of the
Child Welfare League
of America
Inc.

child welfare

May 1955

Trends in Children's Services

Symposium:

On Social Work Training

Foster Parent Views

Temporary Care

A Dutch Placement Experiment

CHILD WELFARE JOURNAL OF THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, Inc.

HENRIETTA L. GORDON, Editor

CHILD WELFARE is a forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems and the programs and skills needed to solve them. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

CONTENTS

	Page
Trends Toward Better Children's Services	1
By Joseph H. Reid	
Symposium: Developing Generic and Specific Knowledge through the Study of Children's Services	6
The Curriculum and the Student's Needs for Practice	6
By Jane Ann Epperson	
An Approach to Specialization Within Casework	8
By Josleen Lockhart	
A Foster Parent's Experience with Temporary Care	12
By W. W. Clepper	
Editorial Comments	17
A Board Member Speaks	18
Reader's Forum	20
News from the Field	21
A Dutch Experiment in Placement with a Time Limit	22
Book Notes	24
Classified Personnel Openings	26

Editorial and general office: 345 East 46th Street, N. Y. 17, N. Y. Published monthly except August and September by the Child Welfare League of America, Inc. Annual Subscription, \$3.00; Single Copies, 35 cents.

VOL. XXXIV

No. 5

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TRENDS TOWARD BETTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Joseph H. Reid

Executive Director
Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

Social workers' concern with improving skills and techniques can no longer insure the development of adequate services. Mr. Reid points out that today we must include an understanding of social trends as these affect human needs.

TODAY child welfare workers serve, or are being asked to serve a very different child than we served 200 or 100 or even 30 years ago. This was brought home to me as, while walking around an old section of Charleston during an idle hour, the other day, I saw an old cemetery. Reading the inscriptions on the tombstones—something I like to do—I was impressed by the fact that life in Charleston has changed very greatly. So many of the tombstones were inscribed to the memory of a wife who died at 16 or to a child who had died at infancy, or at two or three years. I realized that in terms of child welfare, time itself is perhaps the greatest determinant of trend in the services that we need to provide children. More people today live their normal span of years. Medicine has almost licked the problem of death of mothers in childbirth and of children in infancy. The tremendous strides that have been made in health standards generally have almost wiped out the orphan as a phenomenon in our society.

Changing Need for Foster Care

A report of an institution in South Carolina made by the League twelve years ago showed that about 75 per cent of the children there were orphaned. Today, in the country as a whole, less than three per cent of all children cared for outside their own homes are orphans. Nor do they come into foster care mainly because of the economic inadequacy of their families, as they once did. Rather, the greatest number of children require care today because of family disturb-

ance and marital unhappiness—because of the inadequacy of adults. The inability of parents to give emotional nurture to their children is the most important single cause of the need for children's services. This must be faced squarely. Our services can no longer be designed for the child who simply is in need of food, shelter and clothing. Though we have about conquered premature death of parents, we face the paradox that the death of good parents may be a less serious thing in the life of the child than having to live with parents who reject him, or parents who are inadequate or childlike themselves. The scars that are left on the child's personality and on his emotions are usually far, far greater from living with grossly inadequate parents. So today we must strive to correct the impression in the minds of the general public that child welfare services are synonymous with the concept of the orphan and the orphanage. Increasingly child welfare workers are having to work with troubled children. The public must understand this and our services must be geared accordingly.

The orphan has practically disappeared. Our social services, our Social Security programs, improved pastoral counseling and other factors have resulted in a lower proportion of our children coming each year into foster care—this is progress. These trends of time, advances in medicine and other sciences, are perhaps the most important things for us to observe, not just trends in techniques or methods of practice, for they are the greatest assistance in carrying out the basic function of every child welfare agency—putting itself out of business, keeping children with their families.

From an address delivered at the Southern Regional Conference, Charleston, South Carolina, February 26, 1955.

Effect of Trends on Practice

Today every state in the country faces an inexorable change in its population rate and structure. According to *Harpers magazine*,* 1954 marked the highest birth rate in our history. It had been predicted that the birth rate for 1954 would be a very low one. We thought we had passed the period of greatly increased birth rates of the last war, for the young married couples of 1954 were the babies born during the depression. Because those were the years of low birth rate, it was thought that there would be fewer newly married couples and, therefore, fewer babies. Instead something is going on in the United States that is very healthy—people are marrying earlier and having larger families. The four-child family is again “respectable.”

It is estimated that within the next ten years there will be a twenty per cent increase in population in the United States. However, while there will be some 16,000,000 more children by 1975, our working force of adults will only increase by approximately six per cent. The field of social work, already heavily burdened by scarcity of personnel, now has to look forward to a much larger number of children and families to serve with perhaps not much of an increase in professional personnel. This demands the most careful examination for efficiency of policies, procedures and practices. It demands imagination in educational standards, in using people with less than we consider to be full professional training. Many agencies, anticipating what is happening in terms of shortage of workers, are searching for ways to use these people. For example, throughout the Carolinas agencies are pooling their resources to bring into the institution well-qualified personnel to help them in their training of house-parents.

Children do not wait to grow up. All of us in child welfare—board members, professionals, the lay public—have to study population trends thoughtfully as a basis for planning the various services including adop-

* Peter F. Drucker, “America’s Next Twenty Years: I. The Coming Labor Shortage.” *Harpers Magazine*, March 1955, pp. 27-32.

tion, foster home care and institutional care, just as we plan for increased school facilities. As responsible people, we have no choice but to face these trends, and anticipate next steps. We are not dealing with the unfathomable future, we are dealing with the present. It will soon be upon us, for the parents of 1965 and 1975’s children are children today.

Increased Knowledge of Child Development

A second good trend is the rather rapidly increasing knowledge of human development and of the emotional needs of children. There is deeper understanding of the importance of the mother to the child and of the child’s need for love. If you examine the attitudes of people, there is no question but that, with increased understanding of the importance of the child’s own mother to his natural development, there has been a better understanding of the whole child. Those of the church, those of the law, and those concerned with education of children are also tending to look at the whole child rather than a part of him. In a certain sense those who are concerned with protecting a child’s religious heritage realize that if the child is to learn to love God, he must learn to love man. At the least a child is in grave danger of not being able to love God if his parents are people who are either unloveable or people he does not understand. The various professions realize that we must work together toward our common aims. This knowledge, this trend in thinking, is not taking place just from 2 to 4 p.m. in some conference program and then forgotten.

Strides Toward A Home for Every Child

I shall approach the third trend from the negative standpoint. It needs to be stressed that though we are learning there is still much we have not learned. This lack of knowledge is responsible for the inexcusable practice of paying someone other than the parents more to care for a child than we make available to his own parents. We talk

about the importance of holding families together, we all know the correlation between the breakup of family life—the “latch-key child”—and the growth of delinquency. We so willingly appropriate millions of dollars for “delinquency control” or build new detention homes and add more police to our forces. At the same time we fail to face a very simple fact. We believe what we are saying about the sanctity of the family, the importance of the mother to a child, yet in some states we offer the mother of two young children whose husband is dead a maximum of \$35 per month on which to live, though we know she cannot possibly provide a home on that amount. At the same time we are perfectly willing to pay from \$40 to \$120 per month per child to foster parents to take care of those children. Or we have institutions where the cost per year per child ranges from \$1000 to \$3000 per year. This is an immoral use of resources. Two institutions of the Carolinas many years ago recognized the irrationality of bringing children into their institutions for purely economic reasons, so they began to supplement the families’ income. It was a small but significant step, and it was out of such experiments that we got our Aid to Dependent Children’s law. This is logical, not only in the interest of children and families—since we believe in family life—but also from the standpoint of making the most of our financial resources.

Why then do we persist in maintaining children in institutions and in foster homes when with adequate adoption resources many of these children could be made free to be placed in permanent homes. Is it not illogical, simply because we happen to have built up a certain type of social institution, or a certain type of service, and because we have not sufficient money to provide adequate service (or think we don’t) to give money to perpetuate something that is bad in terms of the individual child. A few years ago a study was made in California by a citizens’ committee of some 600 people. A very dangerous statistic was unearthed; that of all the children in foster care in the city of Los Angeles (and most of these chil-

dren are in foster homes) some 14 per cent might be made available for adoption *if resources existed*. The still more tragic fact is that this ratio may well apply to the nation as a whole, where 40,000 to 60,000 children are in similar circumstances. By resources we mean better laws and lawyers to get laws changed; adoption agencies and trained social workers; campaigns to inform the public seeking infants that there are older children, handicapped children, and children whose heritage is not quite “blue blood” waiting for a home. The League gets many opportunities to appear on radio and television to publicize adoption services. But we must first find out who these children are and how they can best be served. Soon we shall begin a nationwide study to see whether we can describe these children accurately and define the obstacles that stand between them and a permanent home.

This trend toward putting two and two together is occurring elsewhere, as it did in California. For example, as you know, the institutions of the Children’s Home Society of North Carolina are making a real effort to help institutional children who need them find adoption homes. But we have a long way to go before we can say we are making intelligent use of the resources we have. I am not suggesting that we do not need more resources, but as long as the unbelievable inadequacy of the administration of our Aid to Dependent Children’s law exists, we cannot achieve intelligent use of other child welfare resources.

We still have states where the problem of illegitimacy is dealt with by legislating against it; by declaring that it is legal to have only one child illegitimately; with the second child the unwed mother will be cut off from relief. There are still such punitive attitudes toward parents in many of our laws, and though, in part they are disappearing, we have to continue to make certain that, consistent with our beliefs, with the things we talk about in our conferences and on Sundays, we do not take out on children the sins of their parents. Many of us are amused when we look back into history to

the evil times of "scarlet letter" psychology, but the tragedy is that it is still in our midst.

Testing New Ideas

There is another trend, and I think it is a hopeful one, which is the willingness to experiment with new ideas. Attitudes about adoption are changing very rapidly and very favorably. Many agencies in the United States are proceeding on the basis that any child is adoptable for whom parents can be found who are willing to adopt him, and are experimenting to see if it works. These agencies, courageously not afraid to make a mistake, are experimenting with new practices. For example, in New York an agency has a service for foster home care of premature infants. When they started out everyone tried to discourage them by stating that it would be impossible to find foster homes for premature infants.

Agencies are also experimenting with new ways of placing children. For example, perhaps all of us at one time presumed that the problem of the adoption of Negro children was almost unbeatable. A new agency was started in New York to cope especially with this problem. The first week they were in operation, the bare announcement of their opening produced 31 requests from Negro families who wanted to adopt children. The amazing thing is that many of the requests came from Texas, Florida, the midwest—all over the country.

Along with this trend to search boldly for new ways of doing things, is a trend to be somewhat skeptical of clichés or panaceas. Social workers are probably no worse than others, but sometimes it seems that we were rather easy victims. We have stopped repeating the phrase "foster home versus institution" because now we know that any rounded child welfare program must have both good institutional care and good foster home care. But we do sometimes fall into a cliché like "a bad home is better than the best institution." Research is so conclusive of the damage that is done to infants cared for in institutions that we should have laws preventing it. However, it is extremely

dangerous to apply this formula to other children because there are many children who benefit far more from institutional care than they do from foster home care. Another old cliché that "long-term care of children is short-time care mishandled" ignores the limits of our present understanding of human beings.

The tendency to reduce complex problems to simple formulas perhaps reflects our desire to make sure that we do not remove any child from his home who should not be removed. Perhaps we should look more realistically at the family. The family has one fundamental purpose—to nurture and raise children in a proper way, but when a family fails in that purpose, in a sense it is no longer a family. In spite of the tremendous advances in our understanding of human beings, in the contribution of psychiatry and other disciplines, there is still a tremendous amount that we do not know. Thousands of parents have mental illnesses which we do not know how to treat. To attempt to say that every family is treatable, every child can remain in his own home, and that foster care of children is an evil, is grossly overrating our understanding of human beings and the efficacy of our social and psychological resources. Fortunately, a somewhat more humble attitude is starting to prevail in the literature and in the agencies of the United States, at least as I travel and see them.

In the early days, yellow fever—then called "foreigners' fever"—accounted for many infant and early childhood deaths. Today, epidemics no longer kill our children, but something perhaps more dangerous allows them to be crippled and dwarfed. The fevers we have to combat now are apathy, fear of non-conformity, or complacency, of people who ask with Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Today the question of Cain is phrased somewhat differently: "Will not adequate ADC grants destroy initiative?" "Will this child given too much, want too much as an adult?" "Is he a resident?" "Is he legitimate?" "Can we afford it?"

In order to erase this sickness each individual and every board must take responsibility

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for all children. We must not be afraid to call such fevers of fear what they are and show the public their effects on children. Our country's future depends on the children we rear in each generation. We must remember that social work is a profession which has a proud tradition. Many, if not most, of the social gains in terms of the Social Security laws and better services for children came out of the work of the early pioneers who were not afraid of being looked upon as non-conformists and perhaps being yelled down.

Our Ongoing Responsibility

The most important responsibility is one we have not yet recognized—that is not to allow ourselves to become cynical or discouraged. We must continue to believe that progress is possible. It is only when we take the short view and look only at this year or last year, look only at the problems in our daily caseloads, that we get discouraged. (I know it is difficult to take the long view when you are responsible—as some of you are—for over a hundred children.) Nevertheless we should not despair. It is obvious that we have come a long way when we reflect upon the standards of care of ten or twenty years ago. Our country has steadily progressed in its humanity toward its children.

But social gains do not come into existence unless someone is willing to stick out his neck, and perhaps not be in good repute to everyone in the community. We need to hold up the belief that every human being is potentially capable of being convinced of what is right and that no person would willfully hold to principles that have been proved wrong. Everyone of us has the opportunity and responsibility to attempt to educate everyone else in our community to the needs of the children we serve—the responsibility of being “do-gooders.”

We must continually seek assurance that every child will be able to use the full capacity of the endowment that God has given him. To the degree that we thwart that capacity, we are not fulfilling our obligations as human beings.

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SYMPOSIUM: DEVELOPING GENERIC AND SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE THROUGH THE STUDY OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

This is the second and final series of discussions on the implications for social work training in the University of Chicago's new course, "Placement as Social Treatment." Two articles and Susanne Schulze's presentation have appeared in the April issue of CHILD WELFARE

DISCUSSION: THE CURRICULUM AND THE STUDENT'S NEEDS FOR PRACTICE

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DR. SHULZE's statement regarding the new course at Chicago offers two main points for discussion, the one major, the other minor. The minor point concerns the merging of two foster care courses, and, while it is worthy of consideration, it is not particularly controversial. The major area of interest concerns stripping the course of its "specificity" in order to bring it into line with a generic program.

The merging of the courses, "Children in Foster Homes" and "Children in Institutions," would appear to have been a logical move and one which represented an economy in time and effort. It also constituted further confirmation, if such were needed, of the acceptance of foster homes and institutions alike as a part of the larger experience of foster care, and of social work's recognition of the values inherent in a discriminate use of both. The common denominator of both courses was the care of children away from their own homes and both, of necessity, dealt with problems of parent-child relationships, separation, preparation for placement, supervision during the period of placement and ultimate discharge from agency care. As long as the courses were taught separately, repetition in these areas was inevitable. The real divergence came at the point of determination of the appropriate use of both the foster home and the institution.

Here the value of the two considerations is enhanced by their being viewed together. The merged course, then, is an enrichment as well as an economy.

Teaching Specifics is Difficult

The place which the course is to take in the total curriculum, and the focus which it will have, are more provocative. On the basis of the three main ideas which were advanced in relation to rationale, purpose and content, members of the workshop group felt that they were:

dealing with generic principles and practices rather than with things specific to the child welfare field, and that all social caseworkers might well profit by having their learning in the basic sequence deepened and widened in this way for use in any setting. This would apply particularly to social caseworkers in those agencies whose programs include placement of adult clients in foster homes and institutions. . . .

It would be impossible to draw a precise line separating the generic from the specific. To this writer, however, it would seem that in this instance generic knowledge, or knowledge needed by or common to all social work groups, was forged into specific principles articulated in a specific practice course. While these three principles are specific to child welfare, they are not exclusively used in work with children, and doubtless do have a value of transferability into other areas of specialization. Present day reality, therefore, demands that certain principles be treated as specific and be taught as such. Placement agencies, both public and private, expect workers coming to them to know the "hows" of placement—as well as the "whens" and

"whys." The limited time allotted for classroom teaching of these principles necessitates a watering down even under the best of circumstances. This has been amply attested to by the insecurity which new workers feel and exhibit when, on the job, they are brought face to face with situations involving the basic principles ordinarily dealt with in a foster care class, e.g., separation of parent and child, homefinding,—adoptive placements, etc. There is always insufficient time for the learning, the testing, and the assimilation of material in this course designed for child welfare majors and focused specifically on child welfare problems. How much greater the difficulty would be if the group lost whatever it has of homogeneity and if the course content were stretched horizontally, in an attempt to illustrate similar problems or situations, as they might be experienced by various age groups.

Generic Alone is Insufficient

The committee at Chicago questioned whether the child welfare field had developed sufficiently to justify offering a specific course, and pointed out "that to give an apparently specialized course in one field might evoke a clamor for other specialized courses in the care of the aged, the handicapped, etc." The field of child welfare and that of the aged or the handicapped hardly seem comparable. It is true that one learns much from the observation of children that is applicable to other areas, but it is also true that the worker in a placement agency has certain experiences which are peculiar to the placement of children on a short-time, long-term or permanent basis. No course can possibly hope to give to students all the skills or the knowledge which they will need in a job situation. As long as particular jobs require certain skills, however, it would seem desirable for schools to acquaint students with these skills through considering them in practice or settings courses. Perhaps this responsibility is felt even more keenly by schools where the majority of students come on agency scholarships that carry specific commitments.

Learning to Use Placement as Treatment

The committee felt that "major emphasis should be placed on teaching the values of a new and corrective life-experience as treatment." In what course then will the student of child welfare learn all that goes into the selection and shaping of the child placement experience? Where does he learn when this new experience must be used, for whom it will have real and lasting value, and ways of making it as effective as possible, and at the same time as painless? Placement *is* social treatment, but somewhere opportunity must be provided for students to learn the things that go into the planning for and use of placement that do make it treatment rather than a measure of expediency.

There are certain elements of social work training that are or should be common to the learning experience of all social workers. In some schools these constitute what has come to be called the "basic first year." There are also courses that are peculiar to the various specializations and these logically fall in the second year of training when the student is in a specialized field work placement and when he is doing a research project and writing his thesis. It provides a testing ground for the generic material which has been offered the student earlier and serves as a factor in the integration of content from other courses. The child welfare major sees the material from the course in growth and development come alive within the framework of a course especially structured for him; in his identification with the worker in the cases selected for study he faces the problems discussed in specific courses like community organization, etc.

This writer feels strongly that the student in any specialization should have at least one specific course. Prerequisites should be required so that a level of interest and of understanding is assured and it should carry credit.

There is not only justification for a specific course within a generic curriculum, but that there is need for it. The student in child welfare must carry certain specifics with him as he enters a job situation. Some of these are

learned or acquired during his field work experience, but many are learned within the framework of a child welfare course. Particularly is this true of the placement picture, for not all child welfare workers will have a field work experience in a placement agency, yet

most of them will have responsibility for placement itself at one time or another on the job. The burden of responsibility for this preparation seems logically to be within a course clearly focused on methods and designated for practitioners in this area.

DISCUSSION: AN APPROACH TO SPECIALIZATION WITHIN CASEWORK

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IN ITS SEARCH for a more effective way of helping people, social work has traditionally been responsive to new insights into the nature of man and his developmental processes. Within the past decade, stimulated by Anna Freud, the study of ego psychology has led to the deeper understanding of the ego and its defensive system. This newer understanding has profoundly influenced the diagnostic process in social work. While not the only factor, it has been a significant one in contributing to the process of self-examination and re-estimation of goals, process, and values of social work by both practitioners and social work educators. Thus, the School of Applied Social Sciences at Western Reserve University, as many others, began a study some three years ago which resulted in extensive revision of the curriculum which was put into effect beginning with the first-year class in September, 1954. Major consideration was given to the question of the relationship between the specific and the generic content in the new curriculum.

We were sincerely committed to an honest and thorough evaluation of our goals, methods, and philosophy in the light of our maturing profession and the demands being made of social work and of the social worker. Like many schools of social work, we had

a tradition related to the casework specializations of child welfare, family casework, medical social work, and psychiatric social work. Faculty and graduates could recall the time when students who majored in one specialization had few courses with students in the other specializations, and actual communication between students and instructors of the various specializations was limited. Needless to say, we had left that era far behind. In the more recent past, content which was considered specific to function and setting was concentrated in the second-year class program, and some few steps toward recognition of that which was common in the various specializations had been made.

As our study progressed, we had many doubts and questions about whether the specific could be integrated into the generic courses without serious loss in terms of the ability of our graduates to practice in a given setting. On the other hand, in educating for the profession, we did not want to be training technicians. We were most determined that our graduates be able to practice casework with even greater competence than formerly had been the case.

The Nature of the Specific

We asked once again the old question: What is specific, both in knowledge and skill, in relation to the specialization? Is the specific unique, and thus different, or is the difference one of weighting and emphasis? Were the sharp distinctions between the specializations historically necessary to our growth and development as a profession but

becoming obsolescent in the traditional meaning of these distinctions?

What we have evolved, as a direction for our work on these questions as well as on others raised during the process of our study and revision, is reflected in the first stage of our curriculum development. Our new class program is based on the major assumption that it is concern for people which has brought us together, whether the method we use be group work, casework, or community organization; and whether the setting be family agency, child care agency, hospital, settlement, community center, school, mental hygiene clinic, or council of social agencies.

In developing the program for the casework sequence, the aim is to help the student to develop skill in meeting the needs of people. We operate on the major assumption that the worker whose practice has developed on a sound diagnostic base can practice effectively in different settings. The goal of developing a social worker so skilled and knowledgeable that he can be all things to all people does not seem to be realistic. There will always be social workers whose interests and skills will lead them to develop special skills in work with children, adolescents, unmarried mothers, or delinquents because people bring to social work differences in personality, in life experiences, and in natural capacities. It is psychologically sound to use these differences.

Specialties Developed Specific Knowledge

Generalizations and principles developed and refined in one casework specialization are applicable in the broader range of casework practice. For example, child welfare has traditionally been concerned with the placed child. Out of this long experience, child welfare has developed rich content on the social-psychological meaning of separation and placement to the child, to the parents, to the community, and to the worker. The child welfare worker makes daily use of the principles which have been developed in helping the child and the parent with the

conflicts aroused by separation and placement. The medical social worker has deep understanding of the meaning of illness, operation, and hospitalization, and likewise makes daily application of the principles which have developed out of this experience. The psychiatric social worker has developed increasing recognition of the importance of the contribution of various professional disciplines to the fuller understanding of the client and his problem. The psychiatric social worker has, in addition, developed methods of working with the more disturbed clients. Both of the latter two specializations have refined principles of participating in the treatment team which are applicable to the participation of the social worker in interdisciplinary cooperation on an even broader scale.

Out of his experience in working with whole family units, the family caseworker has developed knowledge and understanding of, and trust in, the capacity of confused, conflicted, hostile, rejecting parents to effect some modification of the attitudes and behavior which are damaging to the development of children. The goal of this practice is that it be in relation to diagnostic evaluation of the parents and a realistic assessment of the parents' potential "parental sense." All these principles have developed as a result of the concentration and attention given to special problems and functions within the historically determined agency setting, and they are applicable to all social casework practice.

Service Is Based on Diagnostic Thinking

It would seem to be one of the major educational tasks facing the profession to integrate these contributions in the program of the school of social work. The aim is not that the child welfare worker would be less competent in working with the child, parent, and foster parent in relation to the problems of separation and placement, or the medical social worker have less understanding of the meaning of illness and of the experience of hospitalization, but that in helping any client the worker in any setting may be

equipped to make constructive use of our increasing understanding of an ever-widening range of factors. We have conviction that such an approach, for instance, would prepare a worker for the problem of work with parents of children in placement. The worker would be able to consider the goals, the methods, and the content of such work with parents on a diagnostic base, free of the very real limitations imposed by education specific to function and setting.

The goal of the work with the parents of the placed child depends on the original diagnostic thinking about the purpose of placement and the potential of the parent. If placement is permanent and adoption is planned for the child, this would set certain limits on the work with parents. If it is indicated that the child will return to his own home, what then is the goal of the work with the parents of the placed child? We have traditionally worked with parents, helping them with their feelings about placement, in order to protect the placement, to maintain the placement, to enable the child to make the best use of placement. Our identification has thus been with the child and what we want for the child without taking into account the parents' own needs to be parents. In our work with parents, we see now that we must move more directly into the area of the parent-child relationship. We are beginning to recognize the necessity of seeing people whole and so meeting the needs of those we serve rather than expecting people to adapt themselves, their problems, and the solutions they seek for their problems to traditional agency limitations. Our skill must be used to help the parent to keep focus on the basis of our diagnostic thinking about the parents and his problem rather than on the basis of the service of the agency.

Curriculum at Western Reserve

In the practice courses in the first two semesters, all casework students are given this diagnostic base. In the third semester, casework students are assigned to sections in the practice course according to their special interest and field placement. Each section

will study case material illustrating the special diagnostic and treatment problems of that particular specialization. In the fourth semester, all casework students will again be given generic content, using material drawn from all specializations.

In the third-semester practice course child welfare students are given that content which we consider to be specific to child welfare. This content is related to the responsibility involved in providing full-time substitute care for children. The student must have an opportunity to study intensively the various steps in the study-diagnosis-treatment process as it applies to placement of children. He will concentrate here on the special diagnostic problems encountered by the child care caseworker. Certainly there is no greater diagnostic casework skill than that required in understanding the meaning of the request for placement; in helping the parents to examine the situation which has led them to consider placement as the solution of their problem; and in understanding the parent-child relationship in relation to the needs of the child. In protective situations, there is the equally difficult task of determining whether the child is to be maintained in his own home or whether placement is necessary. Then, when placement is indicated, the needs of the child are evaluated in order to select the most appropriate form of substitute care. In the provision of substitute care, there is, of course, the additional diagnostic problem of assessing the potential of a family to serve as foster parents or adoptive parents, thus meeting the needs of the placed child.

Applying Principles to Environment

The second area, which will receive major consideration in this course, deals with how the social worker works with the environment, foster home or institution, in order to meet the needs of the child. The student studies how the worker helps the child to make maximal use of placement. This includes preparation of the child and the parents for placement as well as the continuing work with them in relation to the reality of

separation and placement. The student also studies how the worker helps the foster parents develop in their capacity to meet the special needs of the placed child. This role of the caseworker in relation to the foster parent is different in significant ways from that the student has learned in the development of his skill as a caseworker. The appropriate application of casework principles in working toward this educational goal with the foster parents and the responsibility of evaluating the foster family's capacity to serve the child make new demands on the student both in terms of attitude and method.

Students vary in their ability to transfer what they have learned elsewhere into this new area of work with people, but they all need an opportunity to see how these principles apply in different situations, with varying responses, strengths and weaknesses, shown by foster parents. These are only a few of the specific questions which must be considered in sufficient detail that students will understand how the principles do apply in such cases: how the social worker prepares the foster family for the child who is to be placed with them; how the worker contributes to the foster parents' understanding of the child's behavior, his loyalty to his own parents, his attitude toward the foster family, and so on; how the worker helps the foster parents to share the child with his own parents; how the worker interprets to the foster family the necessity of the agency's continuing responsibility regarding the child; and how the worker helps the foster parents to give up the child when this is necessary.

Work With Other Disciplines

Another course is offered in the second year which contains content particularly appropriate to the field of child welfare and to other specializations in which the social worker participates with other disciplines in planning and working with the client. This course, "Social Work in Multidisciplinary Settings," deals with the effect of setting and function on the practice of social work. In

helping the student to develop an understanding of the role of the social worker in the team, consideration is given to such aspects as the sharing of responsibility with other professions; the meaning and effect of status factors on the participation and contribution of various members of the team; the special problems of communication in the multidiscipline setting. Throughout the course, material is drawn from various settings—clinic, hospital, institution—so that the student has an opportunity to examine these factors and to apply the principles developed in relation to specific settings and problems.

Some of the content of the traditional child welfare courses is contained in other courses. In the informational courses, the student gains understanding of social problems which affect children. Content on the development processes is greatly enriched in the course, "Growth and Development," as it is now constructed, so that it is now possible for all students to develop increasing ability to observe and evaluate the development of children. In "Social Welfare Organization," the student learns of various services which have developed to meet the needs of children, such as those to meet the needs of the dependent child, the delinquent child, and the handicapped child, and of the legal framework establishing and underlying these services. To the end that students may have a perspective on current services and programs for children, content on the development of child welfare services and programs is integrated into the study of the historical development of the profession.

Extremes Must Be Avoided

We are, therefore, organizing the teaching of practice into three areas: that which is common in practice; that which is specific but which can be applied elsewhere; and that which is different or unique. Education for practice in our growing profession must help the student to develop skills based on principles from all three areas. In discussing our curriculum revision at the Annual Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education, in

Chicago, in January, 1955, Virginia Tannar concluded:

... [Our] commitment to teaching practice in one area of social work no longer carries with it the need to maintain unrealistic differences and distinctions between these skills—differences and distinctions based on vested interests, on misconceptions of importance, rivalrous strivings for status, all of which contributed toward a divisiveness within the field itself and constituted an early and unavoidable stage in the emerging of professional sophistication and expertness in social work. We had to be emotionally ready to see what is common in social work practice before we began to test out its generic application, but caution about carrying our commonness to the same extreme as we did our uniqueness needs to permeate our thinking. Factoring out what is common in practice itself did not mean lack

of discernment of differences. It did suggest, however, a way of moving into the discovery of alignments and interrelations which exist potentially and the use of these discoveries to develop more effective methods of communicating what we know must be learned by students.

We thus recognize that the achievement of this goal requires an internal shift for all of us because it means that we must think of ourselves, our practice, and our profession in a way that is significantly different from that to which we have been accustomed. From the deep roots of our past, we know that such shifts have produced growth in our professional commitment.

A FOSTER PARENT'S EXPERIENCE WITH TEMPORARY CARE

W. W. Clepper

Simsbury, Connecticut

This warm article, written from the point of view of a family who offered their home for temporary care of children, discusses how agency procedures and practices affect what the family can give to the child and the child's adjustment in the home.

STUDENTS of child welfare services may long have foreseen the growing use of the "special" or "professional" foster family. Yet it is fascinating to read of actual experiments the country over, as they emerge in professional literature. Certainly Miss Miller and Miss Wildy have given us vivid accounts of their enterprises in recent issues of *CHILD WELFARE*.^{*} Dozens of other projects are known to be in the process of development, of which we will doubtless hear in due time. Who would gainsay the likelihood that what is now considered the "special" foster family may not ultimately supplant the traditional boarding home, just as surely as the "paid" home replaced the old "free" boarding home?

My wife and I get a personal fillip in learning of these experiments. For three years,

along with our pre-adolescent daughter, we operated as a "subsidized" foster family. Through a public child-caring agency, we took on from one to five children, from six months to ten years of age, over a time-span of overnight to three months, both white and Negro, with all degrees of casework preparation ranging from long duration down to a sometimes necessary zero.

Although both of us had had social work experience, my wife in public assistance, and I in public and private child-placing, we considered ourselves neither "special" nor "professional." To be sure, it was the untraditional "subsidy" which enabled us to be in this business at all. The fact that we had children for so short a stretch set us apart somewhat from average foster parents. Otherwise our experiences seemed entirely average, normal, down-to-earth, indeed at times grimy.

With a child balancing precariously on the edge of a tree-house, it seemed unfitting,

^{*} Clara Miller, "The Agency-Owned Foster Home," *CHILD WELFARE*, November 1954, p. 9. Lois Wildy, "The Professional Foster Home," *CHILD WELFARE*, January 1955, p. 3.

somehow, to be reading professional advice on how to improve as foster parents. In fact, during this period we opened not one pamphlet or book on child care, save Dr. Spock's little volume on medical symptoms. We had no heart for professional self-searching. In short, we felt—and acted—like “the compleat amateurs.” Yet I believe we lived through much that is common for boarding parents, whether they be traditional, “special,” or “professional.”

Now that we have returned to social work in a professional capacity, we have been free to look back and consider some of these experiences. I don't think we learned anything not already well known to the trained and experienced social worker; certainly nothing that has not been illustrated in one or another of the Child Welfare League's case record exhibits. But we did confirm and deepen some convictions already gained, conditioned, of course, by our previous life experiences and biases. Some of these convictions are related here; the fellow practitioner can be his own judge of their validity.

Routine and the Foster Child

First of all, we were surprisingly impressed with the way in which children made use of the very structure of daily family life. What could be more humdrum than a morning schedule of mother helping children get dressed, daughter feeding cats and rabbits, father getting breakfast (invariably amusing, I must confess), then the bell-ringing signal for breakfast, the ceremony of washing or re-washing, breakfast itself, dish-washing, off-to-work and off-to-school?

As foster father, I necessarily missed the middle of the day. But evening found us picking up the routine of dinner, dish-washing, quiet play or rough-housing as the mood suited, bath, story, and bed. Taken-for-granted as this routine might be, the majority of children seized upon it to the point where it became high ritual. Story-telling must not come before bath, because bath *always* comes before story-telling. Nor could my wife and I decide whether we wanted to kiss goodbye when I left for work

in the morning. Once having done this, it was the thing to do, a proper step in a sequence of steps. “OK, it's time now to kiss mommy goodbye,” as one six-year-old girl almost daily admonished me. So in the limelight of an intrigued audience, we performed our duty, taking yet another step in “the turning of the day.”

This is not to suggest that there were not struggles around our mutual adaptation to a routine, nor that some events such as eating and bathing and going to sleep were not highly charged with individual meaning and significance. But somehow the presence of a relatively impersonal routine seemed to serve as a highly desired framework of living. Was this because our children had been deprived of the basic, homely certainties? Had they been aimlessly bored and lonely? Or did they fasten on schedule as a protection against being forced into a naked personal position vis-a-vis us as foster parents?

Whatever the reason or combination of reasons, a mastering of daily routine seemed to free the child to relate to us at his own pace and in his own way. Out of this could then flow the child's various means of testing us out, so recognizable to social workers—the symptoms of ambivalence toward foster parents, the deep questions about one's own family, the guilt about one's self. But it did seem to us that these questions could only bubble forth, and daily living really be experienced and enjoyed, as the child found certainty in routine. Perhaps this is only the converse of what artists have long known: “Art, quite like small children, must have some structure of discipline to be able to grow.”* With us and our children, the structure of the family day emerged as the primary discipline.

How Placement Becomes Reality

As we became more experienced with children entering and departing from our home, a pattern of growth and development was revealed which I consider to be our second

* Ben Shahn in letter to the *New York Times*, February 13, 1955.

"discovery." Curiously enough—or perhaps it was not so curious after all—the steps of development seemed to follow the visiting, and leaving, of persons who were a party to the placement.

Ordinarily the child's first day or two with us was a time of stunned existence; current living ceased and all effort was directed toward an early return to his own home. With the re-appearance of the social worker, however, and her explanation to the child of his real situation, placement frequently became affirmed in the child's mind for the first time. Then the initial visit of the parent or parents, especially if it was planned, definitely confirmed placement, for as the child described his placement to his mother or father, it would take on reality for him. The social worker was perhaps the instrument of placement, and the foster parents the personification of placement; both became tied to the child's stream of living when parents visited to complete the circle.

The Significance of "Partings"

Threaded through these comings and goings were the intra-familial leave-takings and returns. Foster mother's night out was frequently the first threat to security in the new setting. As official baby-sitter during these times, I can attest that they were fraught with anxiety. But our conviction of the rightness of mother's leaving, and the patent fact of her subsequent return, always paid off in a measurable note of confidence. Then the visits out to church, to entertainments, and friends, and the consequent returns home, all served to build up a bank of trust about what was happening day by day. Often the crowning touch would come when the child himself would leave us for a session with social worker or psychologist, or a shopping expedition, or a medical checkup. For once, the child was in the position of doing something to us, instead of being "done to." His return to us would then appear as an act of grace on his part. And how glad we always were to hear of his adventures!

So, as day tumbled after day in a round of experience; as opportunities for individual

adventure grew out of the dependable structure of daily routine; as the parties to placement performed their various roles of visiting, planning, adjusting, and executing, so that a more permanent plan for the child started to emerge, he began to look toward leaving us. A process of leaving was then inaugurated which was just as fascinating as the process of finding his way into placement.

Some child-placing agencies who planfully use the temporary foster home as preparation for permanent placement, have found that a child rounds out his "temporary" experience in about six months. For reasons which we have not been able to analyze, our children seemed to reach a peak of achievement by the end of two months. Subsequent care invariably was carried forward on a plateau with neither progress nor regression. If the child left earlier than two months, he was not necessarily harmed, yet it always seemed that he might have gained more if he had stayed a little longer.

The Caseworker's Meaning to the Child

Our third "discovery" involved the role of the social worker in placement. If ever a social worker questioned his own part in placement, or asked whether he or she made any vital or even minimal difference to the child, let him bury those doubts forever. To us, it would be only a slight exaggeration to say that the social worker often meant the difference between psychological life and death. The public department for which we worked had only recently been established, so that methods and procedures were not clearly formulated or well established. Consequently we had a variety of social workers operating at several different levels of preparedness.

On the one hand we might have a caseworker who was truly able to help the child face the severe problems of living with a strange family, of recognizing with the child both his doubts and his loyalties about his own family, telling him what was certain in his situation, and what was necessarily uncertain. With a caseworker like this in charge, it was always a joy to see the child living

through this stretch of his life situation. The flowering of personality which would follow a winter of turmoil was something to behold. I recall clearly the morning I took two children to a hardware store for some routine purchases. The day before, their caseworker told them that the plans for their moving on to a permanent home had crystallized. This caseworker had shared with them each step in the planning and had helped them with every nuance of feeling. The children had already recounted the steps to us many times. But on entering the store, they burst into another animated recital of these plans, to the delight and astonishment of clerks and customers. Here were children living out their placement to the hilt.

On the other hand, the inexperienced worker who had not yet developed a body of practice, despite the best intentions in the world, usually left the child with suppressed difficulties. Hence difficulties beyond what seemed rightfully ours to carry resulted. One lovable preschool boy brought this home to me with vengeance. He was considered well-adjusted and happy, and needing little or no casework help. After a few weeks with us, he began, I sensed, to like me more than he cared to show. One day, as I was driving him home from the barber shop, we chanced to pass through a neighborhood where evidently he had lived once with his father. Immediately a Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde transformation took place. So bitter was the hatred which this youngster suddenly expressed toward me that I am sure, if the weapon had been at hand, he would have killed me on the spot. What he seemed to be telling me, as clear as crystal though not in words, was this:

I hate you because I'm starting to like you more than my own father, I hate you for making me disloyal, I hate my father for not earning my allegiance, and I hate myself for whatever I've done to bring this about.

In the face of this, I began feebly to interpret his feelings, then stopped short. As foster father and a participating factor in this feeling syndrome, I could not possibly take on the burden of the social worker. My only

recourse was to live with the given situation and bend with the wind. At that point, as a taxpayer, I would cheerfully have approved an \$8000 salary for an experienced child welfare worker. The results, for the child and his parents first, and no less for the community, would have paid off with compound interest.

Discoveries About Placement Practice

Beyond these three major "discoveries," we obtained some limited experience relating to a scattering of practices. For example, we found it worked well to have the foster children definitely younger than our own daughter. This is a practice widely observed, of course, among child welfare agencies. In the one instance where a foster child was almost our daughter's age, a competitive situation did arise. I had occasion to witness one of the outcroppings at a time when my family was seeing me off at an airport. My airplane travel vicariously gave our daughter considerable status. The ensuing fantasy, replete with gala accounts of her "naval-officer" father's exploits, was almost too much for all of us. This especially upset a foster daughter, just about her age.

Another test of social work practice came around the use of home and office interviews for the foster home study. The advantages of first having an office interview have been manifested and were pointed out by Dorothy Hutchinson in her definitive work, "In Quest of Foster Parents."* We were interviewed first in our home; however, our first year's evaluation took place in the office. As a result of this experience, we would heartily support the view that the place for the initial interview is rightly the agency office. If there exists a subtle inhibition on the worker's part to inquire into the family's intimate relationships at their home, so is the family inhibited about raising questions which might be out of place with a guest. Probably if a previous office interview had set the desired tone, the subsequent relationship in the home would

* Dorothy Hutchinson, *In Quest of Foster Parents; A Point of View on Homefinding*; New York, 1943, Columbia University Press.

not have shaped up as guest-and-host. Regarding the office setting for the evaluation, that did seem sound from our point of view. In fact, we would venture to suggest that office interviews can be much more extensively used than they have been in past practice.

One final practice with which we had limited experience involved the question of keeping a family of children intact. In the face of a cultural climate which abjures the thought of separating siblings, social agencies have found it difficult to be flexible, to separate when right professionally, for separation can so easily seem a bludgeon rather than a scalpel. We had at least one family group where by hindsight (the only sight possible in this case) separation would have been a boon to the children. This involved a family of five where each had his own pronounced problems. At any given time, true enough, we could try to help a given child with his problems. For instance, I felt warmly related to the oldest, a girl who nightly said her prayers to me—and what prayers they were—right out of *Green Pastures*! Then we would talk a bit about her own overwhelming sense of responsibility for the four younger children, which she was able neither to carry nor to give up to us. However, it was beyond our powers to muster enough of this help to offset a kind of group neurosis carrying over from their past. Aside from the question of our own competency, we might have been able to cope with a split group of say, three children coming at once, the others going to another family. For the children, such separation would have broken up the configuration in which each had been so negatively caught.

The Parents' Reward

We look back on our three years with the agency, and a previous year working independently, with a genuine sense of fulfillment. We came out with the firm conviction that many children can have a creative experience under foster family auspices. We felt that the children definitely gained a breathing space, or more properly, a footing

from which they could solidly take off to the next steps ahead. As a group, the children disproved the notion that children living away from their own families must necessarily be pitied. Rather, by laying hold of the life forces within, and the deliberate functioning of the social agency without, they demonstrated that their experiences can be rich and rewarding, if not always conventional.

On our part, we enjoyed the gusty quality of living which these youngsters brought. In our best moments we felt like the nurserymen in our rural neighborhood, who lovingly transplant little seedlings so that stronger root systems can be developed—confident all the while in the ultimate fruition of their precious plants. By having a hand in a similar life process, we reaped a satisfaction which was unique, but not unlike that of the farmer whose barns are full from the harvest. Only with such fruitful returns can any form of foster parenthood be worthwhile, whether the label be “special,” “professional,” or plain foster family.

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The Task Force Recommendation for the Children's Bureau

WE ARE publishing below the report of a task force of the Hoover Commission which recommends the removal of the United States Children's Bureau from the Social Security Administration. For some years many people in the field of social welfare have believed that the interest of children would be best served if the Children's Bureau were in a better position to effect federal policy on matters concerning children. Many others believe that to be a subordinate bureau in an administration primarily concerned with social insurance and public relief is incompatible with the Children's Bureau's responsibilities for all aspects of childhood needs in the United States including health services. They also believe that the Bureau would be more effective in improving such welfare programs as A.D.C. were the Bureau on a policy-making level. There are, of course, widely held contrary opinions.

This matter deserves the careful study and attention of all those interested in child welfare, particularly in the light of the decreasing influence of the Children's Bureau in recent years.

Task Force Report on Federal Medical Services, February 1955 Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government*

The Children's Bureau is one of the few Federal agencies organized strictly on the basis of clientele. Founded in 1912 in a reform era, the Bureau has operated with dedication and with outstanding success. In 1946, when it was transferred from the Department of Labor to the Federal Security Agency (predecessor of the new Department), it was placed within the Social Security Administration.

We conclude that the Children's Bureau does not logically belong in the Social Security Administration for it has important duties outside the welfare field. On the other hand, the work of the Bureau has been so satisfactory and its focus on the whole child so desirable that its functions should not be split among other constituent agencies of the Department.

* This Report is for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C.—Price 40 cents.

We believe that the Bureau should be continued intact, and elevated to a point where the Bureau Chief has access to the Secretary. We also favor giving the Bureau authority and appropriations to make research grants.

The Task Force Recommends: That the Children's Bureau be removed from the Social Security Administration and placed in an administrative position in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare that will facilitate the major mission of the Bureau. This mission is to take cognizance of the needs of the whole child in the broad fields of health, education, and welfare, support necessary research in the field, and stimulate the utilization of new knowledge by the various agencies of the Federal Government within and outside the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and in the States.

JOSEPH H. REID

CONFERENCE CALENDAR—MAY

Northwest Regional Conference

May 1, 2, 3
Hotel Multnomah, Portland, Oregon
Chairman: Mrs. John Catlin, *President*
The Boys and Girls Aid Society of Oregon
Portland, Oregon

Midwest Regional Conference

May 9, 10, 11
St. Paul Hotel, St. Paul, Minnesota
Chairman: Mr. Charles B. Olds,
Executive Secretary
Children's Home Society of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota

New England Regional

May 22, 23, 24
Equinox House, Manchester, Vermont
Chairman: Miss Verne Weed,
Assistant Executive Director
Child Placement and Family Services
Children's Services of Connecticut
Hartford, Connecticut

South Pacific Regional

(No conference
because of location of National Conference)

National Conference of Social Work

May 29-June 3
San Francisco, California
League Headquarters: St. Francis Hotel
League Program Committee Chairman:
Mr. Clyde S. Pritchard, *Executive Secretary*
Children's Bureau of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California
Subcommittee Chairmen:
East Coast: Miss Margaret Barbee
New York, N. Y.
Midwest: Mr. Anthony DeMarinis
St. Louis, Missouri
West Coast: Miss Winifred Cobbledick
Oakland, California

A BOARD MEMBER SPEAKS

On Conference Attendance And Why

THE BOARD MEETING was drawing to a close. Luncheon had been better than usual and the reports very interesting—even though many of those present were not sure the decision of the Personnel Committee was right, or if the new adoption policies fitted the over-all picture. No matter, attendance was excellent with everyone beaming at the new director and taking pride in the fact that such an able person had been found. Of course, the Board members realized that they were accountable but just the same it takes the load off ones shoulders if some one else has all the knowledge and the know-how. That is the reason staff is employed, to actually carry out the business of the agency while the Board sits pretty, asks questions, is thrilled by a successful case history and thinks up ways for the public relations staff to gather in more money.

Finally the president announced that a regional meeting of child welfare agencies would be held in a nearby city and he asked if any of the members would be able to attend? Mr. Jones and Miss Smith of staff were going and board members were urged to attend as well, in fact the president said it was really pretty important for "some of us" to know what was going on in the general field. There were murmurs of, "sorry, can't leave the office," "too many other obligations that week," "I'd like to go, but—," "well, anyway, the agency will be represented by staff and they can tell us about it," and finally, "I move we adjourn."

How many times has this happened at your Board meetings? How come, bearing the ultimate responsibility for the children under the care of our particular agency, we fail to take advantage of the opportunities offered to further our knowledge? A conference is not a place where agencies go to be "represented." The housewife on the Board certainly knows about running her home and the business or professional man knows his work. Yet citizens accept Board membership with little information about the specific

field and often with a limited background of community activity. We really should be a little scared and certainly very humble in the great job of dealing with the lives of those needing service.

Probably the one great unselfish bond holding the volunteer to his work is concern—in our case, concern for children. This, together with a constructive interest in helping to do something about the problems involved, is why we are Board members. In only rare instances do we have knowledge and experience to begin with. When we have the temerity to accept vital chairmanships such as those of adoption practices, legislation and personnel committees, we should also have the willingness and the desire to be proficient in these fields. Our knowledge must of necessity be less technical and in many ways different from that of professional staff, while at the same time we must work closely with them in order to develop a point of view which will help us operate effectively. We are in this thing together.

It is equally vital to be acquainted with total agency trends. The fast-moving and growing world we now live in demands a constant review of what is being done and how well. The size of the agency makes no difference. Whether it is sectarian, nonsectarian, citywide or statewide, insularity and smugness must not be allowed to exist. Keeping abreast of developments is a direct responsibility of the Board. Each individual member should be interested in how to achieve this.

The answer is in conference attendance. Undoubtedly many have been stimulated by participation in a council of social agencies meeting on the local level and worked with others in community planning with emphasis on group thinking. This is good, but more is needed. Child welfare is a specialized field with specific laws and a distinctive type of casework requiring great wisdom in dealing with human lives. It is up to Board members

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as part of the public offering our services to know as much about it as possible. Our school days may be over, but our need to learn is not.

It has been said that conferences are so technical that they would be of no interest to the non-professional. There is also some feeling that the non-professional is not particularly welcome. These misunderstandings need to be cleared up. Conferences consist of general sessions and special-topic and smaller group seminars according to the varied interests, the latter being more technical but certainly never beyond the comprehension of the lay person, with responsibility for the interpretation, policy-making and financing services. At National Conference there are sessions devoted especially to problems of interpretation, of organization, of financing and community planning, all of which are of especial interest to Board members. As to the welcome, it has been my experience to have professional people ask for a Board member to round out a discussion, and on occasions conference participants have wondered why the President or Chairman of the Board did not come with Mr. Jones and Miss Smith.

So don't let that motion for adjournment come up before you have had a chance to take a quick mental look at your need for wider horizons. Ask for the *privilege* of going to the next regional or national conference. There you will find that the great humanitarians—the clergy, legal, or medical professions, casework specialists, agency directors or leaders from local communities—who are devoting their time and thought to the welfare of children, will stimulate and encourage your own activity and strengthen you as an individual. You may discover that your own agency is, by comparison, doing exceptional work and that your personnel committee report and the adoption policies were pretty good after all. Or it just could be that you can hardly wait to get home to ask for some changes. In any case, you will be more apt to know what you are doing and why.

MRS. ROBERT A. BROWN

Board Member, Iowa Children's Home and Aid Society, Des Moines, Iowa

Helen R. Hagan

Becomes Assistant Executive

On April 11, Grace A. Reeder (Mrs. Boles B. Ivanek) retired as Assistant Executive Director of the Child Welfare League. Mr. and Mrs. Ivanek will make their home in Claremont, California. Miss Reeder is thus "officially" ending a long career of outstanding service in the field of child welfare, but those who know her are sure she will continue to be active on behalf of children. She has made a lasting contribution in strengthening the League's program, both as a staff member and earlier as a member of the League's board. The best wishes of the League and Miss Reeder's colleagues in social work go with her.

Helen R. Hagan has been appointed Assistant Executive Director, and Director of Field Service. Miss Hagan is well known for her outstanding research in the field of treatment of emotionally disturbed children. She holds a masters degree in sociology from Syracuse University and is a graduate of the New York School of Social Work. She has completed a third year in psychiatric social work at the University of Pittsburgh. Before coming to the League five years ago, Miss Hagan had extensive experience in both public and private child welfare. She had directed a county child welfare department; served as houseparent, caseworker, supervisor and executive in children's institutions; and was director of casework in a large private multiple-service agency. During the war she served as child welfare consultant in Greece and the middle-east. Her teaching experience includes lectureships at Syracuse University and the New York School of Social Work.

Among the agencies with which she has worked are Sheltering Arms, New York City; DePelchin Faith Home and Children's Bureau, Houston, Texas; Connecticut State Welfare Department; Children's Services of York County, Pennsylvania; Protestant Children's Service, New York City; and the New York State Department of Social Welfare.

READER'S FORUM

Causal Factors

in Adoptive Home Failures

The paper on adoption emanating from Colorado and appearing in the March issue of *CHILD WELFARE* is so thought-provoking that I would like to elaborate upon it briefly.*

First, we owe recognition to the authors for their willingness to "face failure" and to share it with the profession. They and all of us learn not only from successful practice, but also from failures that are recognized, carefully examined and reported. (Incidentally, their comparatively high rate of failures may be due, to some extent, to the authors' sensitive perception in this area, which may or may not exist elsewhere.)

Secondly, the paper is a refutation of the idea, still held in many quarters, that social work practitioners cannot successfully adopt research methods and findings to the analysis and development of practice. Although the methodology is, admittedly, unrefined and the effort does not show many characteristics of punctilious research, the questions posed are meaningful, both from a practice and a research point of view, and the procedures do head in the general direction of providing answers and of testing the general thesis that: the adoption home study is the "crucial task in adoption work." This conclusion is arrived at by the consideration and rejection of matching, presence of other children in the home, post-adoptive supervision, and "desirability" of the child, as crucial in successful adoptions. It is at this point that the methodological weakness of the study bars our acceptance of the authors' primary thesis, and the authors themselves appear to recognize these flaws and submit their material tentatively.

Thirdly, such a tentative submission of obviously challenging material produces varying responses. To some, we hope few in social work, it is an invitation to reaffirm previously

established biases either by fully accepting or completely rejecting the conclusions so tentatively proposed. Certainly it is not the authors' intent to induce such a reaction. To others, we hope many in social work and especially in adoption, it is a challenge for further study with precisely defined hypotheses, carefully structured methodology, adequate use of statistical analysis, and hopefully, more definitive answers.

The challenge for further study is possible to pursue, for example, even within the confines of the article. We find here the following statistics in response to the question, "Does the Presence of Children Already in the Household Have a Bearing?"

Placements of Older Children

	<i>Successful Placement</i>	<i>Unsuccessful Placement</i>	<i>Total</i>
Other children in household.....	16	15	31
No other children in household...	41	10	51
Total.....	57	25	82

The answer to the question the authors pose is, then, that such a distribution as the above will occur by chance considerably less than 5 times out of 100, and therefore that in this study the presence of other children in the home relates to failure in adoptive placement. The authors proceed to ask: Is this relationship causative? Do other children in the home *contribute* to failure in adoption? And by these two questions they open for research purposes not only the problem of relationship of other children in the home to failure of adoption, but also the problem of causality; i.e., what is it that causes such failures to occur more often in such homes than in homes with no other children?

Similarly, the other questions the authors ask lend themselves to further study that is sometimes known as the "Is this so?" and "If it is so, then what *makes* it so?" kind of research. For example, the authors seem to think that "matching" is not crucial for suc-

* Ruth M. Davis and Polly Bouck, "Crucial Importance of Adoption Home Study," *CHILD WELFARE*, March 1955, pp. 20 and 21.

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cessful adoption. Perhaps this is so, but it should certainly be tested in other settings and, if found to be so or not so, the question of why, i.e., the question of causality, will need to be answered.

In this manner, an article on unsuccessful adoption placements in Colorado which provides some answers and poses many questions can contribute to practice-oriented research and, with it, to improvements in practice and increased success in adoptive placements.

MARTIN A. WOLINS

*Research Consultant, Cost Accounting Study,
Child Welfare League of America*

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Group Meetings for Foster Home Intake

Since May, 1954, Child and Family Services of Portland, Maine, has been conducting group meetings of applicants to board children. A "friendly, informal letter" invites the applicant and, where possible, his wife, to a meeting in which the agency's program including its family and children's services is explained in an informal way. Usually, general orientation is given either by the supervisor of casework or the executive director, however, sometimes the homefinder carries the whole responsibility. The homefinder always is the one who discusses how children come to the agency, what goes into the decision to accept them, how they are prepared for placement, and how the caseworker helps foster parents, the child and the parents to make this service most helpful. The foster parents manual is distributed and questions on board rates, licensing, medical care and distribution of clothing are answered.

As may be expected, there are times when an applicant asks questions related to his own situation. The caseworker answers those that are of interest and concern to the whole group, and suggests when "the point may be better considered individually in an interview."

Applicants are helped to see themselves as part of a team, all working in the interest of

the children who need care. In evaluating the program, Mrs. Louise Citrine, Supervisor of Casework, states:

We have used the group meetings not to work out the application process, but to make a presentation of program which can help the applicants to decide whether to go on with an individual home study. Thus the group meeting gives the applicants an opportunity to weigh their own interest without exposing themselves to rejection. The agency can avoid some direct rejections which might influence public relations or damage a person. Only those with more than a passing interest make the effort to come to the meeting. There is further self-weeding out when applicants decide whether to make an individual appointment to discuss application. Since our program has a family service, we have had applicants consider seeing a family counselor for casework service.

We have found this procedure a real saving in interviewing time. The group meeting usually lasts an hour. Recording is kept at a minimum. For those applicants who do not come to the meeting or do not follow through with an individual interview, the sole record is a notation on a file card. This is a saving in dictation time and stenographic expense. Full foster home records are kept on those proceeding with a home study.

At the end of the meeting, the next step is left to the applicants. Some want to make an appointment, most to "think it over"—usually these withdraw. Few have told us directly that they were not applying or have recognized openly that they were ineligible. From our experience to date, we feel that we should continue our initial contact through group meetings in foster home finding. This method does not appear to discourage applicants from coming to the agency. On the contrary, there are direct savings to the agency.

For the past two years, a similar procedure has been used by the Jewish Child Care Association of New York City as a part of an interpretation and recruitment plan. There is no information as to whether it has served to increase the number of homes, but it does save agency time by acting as a self-screening method and it spreads interest and good will.

(The editor will be interested in other agencies' experience with this procedure.)

Summer Workshop—June 27–July 22

The Child With Special Needs in the Normal Group

To study the possibility and limitations at the
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A DUTCH EXPERIMENT IN PLACEMENT WITH A TIME LIMIT

DUE TO the German occupation and its aftermath, post-war Holland is faced with an increase in juvenile delinquency and behavior problems of dimensions unthinkable for that country before World War II. Public and voluntary agencies have responded to meet the need with many projects and measures, most of them used in preventive, protective, correctional and therapeutic work in many other countries. However, some new forms of temporary placement for delinquent as well as for pre-delinquent children have been developed. These are designed to stimulate a better adjustment within a short, definite period away from the home.

The Ministry of Education, Art and Sciences (a government department) has established a system of camps and hostels for "Education Outside the School System." In Dutch this is called "Opvoeding Buiten Schoolverband," and is often referred to by the initials OBSV, in the event you come across them when traveling in the Netherlands. These educational placement facilities are designed to help endangered boys and girls between 8 and 21 years, including those who have committed minor offenses. Specialized treatment is given the children in camps where they stay from three to twelve months.

In 1954 the department administered:

Five camps for socially unstable boys where the boys stayed for one year. There was a separate camp for the age group 12 to 14; 15 to 16; 16 to 17, and 18 to 21 years, and a special camp for 16 to 17 year olds with I.Q.'s of 75 to 85.

Two homes for working boys, mostly in vocational training. Youngsters were admitted both from the community and from other camps as transition to normal living.

Five camps which accept between 40 to 50 boys between the ages 8 to 14 found to be beyond control. Here one age group is accepted at a given time, and generally the boys are from one town or district. The duration is for three months.

Three camps for nautical training. One camp is designed to give elementary training for four months, during which the boy's suitability for seaman's work is evaluated. He is then transferred to one of the two other camps for six months to complete the training.

For girls the ministry administers the following placement facilities:

Five hostels for socially unstable girls: three for girls from 15 to 18 years, of which one is for the mentally retarded; one for girls from 12 to 14, and one for 14 to 16 year olds.

A hostel for working girls which offers transitional living to those who, upon discharge from another of these hostels, cannot return directly to their families.

Five hostels for unmanageable girls from the upper grades of elementary schools. The duration of the stay is three months.

Two hostels for girls between 14 and 20 who are in conflict with their homes but have not come to the attention of the police or juvenile court. During a stay of three or four months, a training course in house-keeping is provided in addition to general education stressing character formation.

Since the war then, twenty-eight special educational facilities of this new type have been established in addition to the usual range of children's institutions. In a country the size of Holland, this is quite an impressive record.

Camp Experience Traditionally Valued

The intake process for these camps and hostels is designed to select those youngsters who can benefit from the type and short duration of the placement, thus excluding delinquents in need of long reeducation, psychopaths and mentally deficient children. Referrals are accepted from children's courts, boards of guardians, school principals and social agencies. For the nautical training camps the boys themselves have to apply at the local public employment services. The psychological age of the youngsters is taken into account in selection for appropriate groups. For acceptance it is essential that the boy or girl should show—at least to some degree—willingness to be admitted and to cooperate in group living. Experience has shown that the youngster usually is aware of the fact that he is in trouble and will reach out for help away from his usual surroundings. The long tradition of the Dutch youth movement with its extensive camping makes a camp experience of fixed duration acceptable and often desirable. Thus, the odium

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and fears, so often connected with placement in corrective or protective institutions, are avoided. From the beginning a public or private social agency is involved and works with the family before, during and after the placement period.

Developing from its treatment and educational goals, the program and life in the camp are greatly influenced by the methods developed in the youth movement. A wholesome balance of a minimum of formal schooling, which is often remedial, is combined with much practical work, outdoor sports and activity groups selected by the children. The intimate life of such a group is designed to develop a feeling for mutual consideration and to promote growth of the individual in an atmosphere of informality and under skilled guidance. Since most of these children are unstable, and come from families where life is disorderly and often disruptive, the healthy order and regularity of living which is established is important. Nevertheless, the romantic appeal of outdoor and camping life is utilized and facilitates the adjustment to the new surroundings.

The Counselor

Each group of from 12 to 16 children has a counselor. He lives, works and plays with his charges. Most of the counselors are youth leaders who developed in voluntary, autonomous youth organizations. They are young enough for full and vigorous participation in the life of their groups. In order to prevent this staff from getting too old and set in its ways, an agreement for five years of service is made with the group counselors. Plans for courses of two months of intensive study each year have been worked out with some schools of social work. This study deepens the theoretical training of these counselors and prepares them for the later full time study of social work. Successful work in this series of intensive courses entitles one to advance credit in professional training.

Twofold Program for Aftercare

Government agencies and the public as a whole in Holland have become greatly con-

cerned with protective and preventive youth work in recent years. These efforts have invoked the help of both sectarian and non-sectarian youth organizations which previously reached only those youths who were able to accept their services. The problem children have come mostly from the great mass of youngsters who did not join organizations. For several years, with the growing awareness of the dangers of delinquency, all the leading organizations have started to reach out to these youngsters with the aid of government support and subventions for special projects. They have been quite successful in attracting and holding a large portion of this "mass youth" as the children are called in Holland, and have developed special leadership and increased recreational facilities in order to accomplish this.

The program of youth camps and hostels is conceived within this broader and more normal community effort. The aftercare for those who have left placement includes, in addition to the casework follow-up, referral to the appropriate youth organization in the child's home town. A welfare officer of the Ministry for Education prepares the contact of the youngster with a worker of the youth organization before discharge and continues to observe how he adapts to the new group. This is seen as an attempt to preserve and strengthen the values the child has acquired in group living and treatment. Because camp placement is for short duration only, it is realized that the values the child has gained would be lost without such attempts at continuation of the wholesome group experiences. This community program corresponds to a careful referral to a group work agency in the United States. However, the ideological goals which usually characterize such groups in the U. S. may be hard to duplicate in many of our agencies.

For every child in such aftercare, a small amount is paid monthly to the organization to which the child is joined. The purchase value of the sum is about \$4.00. If the child breaks the contact, it is reported to the welfare officer. The organization submits bi-

annual reports on the child's adjustment in the community.

New Casework Tool

Whatever the details of such a program, and how individual camps may differ, it would seem that Dutch social work has experimented with a new type of placement which can be useful for the not too seriously disturbed youngster. I visited one of these camps which was occupied at that time by groups of boys from Amsterdam between 8 and 10 years. It was during the third month of their stay. I was greatly impressed by the harmonious group life and the confident relations between the children and their counselors. Social workers from the underprivileged districts of Amsterdam mentioned repeatedly the good effects of this kind of placement, which is not so radical a measure as long-term placement. The possibility of a new placement tool is provided that offers an alternative to leaving a child in an unfavorable home or placing him for an indefinite period. The temporary, time-limited placement can be helpful in carefully selected cases. In addition, the positive group living, with its romantic element, and the aftercare program are characteristic advantages. Here may be a way to help children and families not yet too disrupted. Those camps of shorter duration may give a double advantage. They offer a kind of vacation of several months, but without indefinite absence, so that the parents can get rest from, and—with the help of the family caseworker—perspective on the difficult child. At the same time the child can relax and grow in therapeutic and active surroundings knowing always that he will return home and when. From this "vacation," hopefully he can return to a relaxed family and into new and helpful community contacts. In appropriate cases the time limit itself, understood from the start, seems to offer therapeutic possibilities.

MARTIN M. GLEISNER

*Supervisor, Social Service, United HIAS Service
New York, New York*

BOOK NOTES

Health Supervision of Young Children, by the Committee on Child Health, of the American Public Health Association, Inc. New York, 1955. 179 pp. \$2.00.

This book has been prepared to serve as a guide to the health supervision of well children. As such, it has been written to replace the booklet "The Child Health Conference," published a number of years ago by the U. S. Children's Bureau. The committee responsible for its preparation was composed of professional workers from a number of fields, all having to do with children's health, welfare and education. The content reflects the broad perspective of their combined points of view.

Health is defined as a state of physical, mental and social well-being—not merely the absence of disease. Everything that contributes to, or may threaten, this well-being is a matter of concern to the physician. He must give consideration to children's feelings, attitudes and behavior as well as to their physical status.

The first half of the volume deals with general principles of health supervision. While it is primarily addressed to the physician, it is equally applicable to nurses and others participating in this supervision. A great deal of space is devoted to the relationship between the doctor and the child's mother, apparently for the purpose of sharpening the physician's sensitivity to their mutual feelings and expediting effective two-way communication. This is unusually well presented and may be read with profit by all doctors and nurses sincerely interested in improving their clinical skills.

Parent counseling is also well presented, as are suggestions for helpful anticipatory guidance based on a sound knowledge of normal physical and personality development. There are many practical suggestions for helping children feel comfortable and at ease during the health examination.

Halfway through the book the "child health conference" is defined as "that part of a public health program which offers health supervision for well young children." The

organization and operation of such a conference is given in great detail, with repeated reference to the importance of the emotional atmosphere in which the whole procedure takes place. The terminal chapter concerns health education. Here the stimulating tone of the entire book is expressed in the opening sentence: "A common fault of educators over the centuries has been the assumption that the student is learning what they are teaching. Corollary to this is the notion that if he is not, then the fault lies in him, not in them or their methods. Doctors and nurses are not exempt from this human failing." Some highly practical suggestions for productive health education follow.

The appendices deal with a diversity of topics ranging from a general discussion of rooming-in, to designs for the floor plans of a health conference center. A bibliography of 92 references completes the volume.

This book is highly practical and is well written. Its emphasis on the importance of the emotions in health supervision is refreshing in an outline of this sort. Doctors and nurses as well as child welfare workers who read it sincerely seeking suggestions for widening their horizons and improving their techniques will be rewarded. The volume will presumably have a definite place as a supplementary text for some courses in pediatrics and public health. It is heartily recommended as up-to-the-minute, authoritative reading for all concerned with the health supervision of children.

CHARLES BRADLEY, M.D.

*Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry,
University of Oregon Medical School,
Portland, Oregon*

The Unmarried Mother in Our Society, Sara B. Edlin. Farrar, Straus and Young, New York, 1954. 187 pp., \$3.00.

In Sara Edlin's own words, this book is "... the story of Lakeview Home—the institution for unmarried mothers with which I have been associated during all those (forty) years—and the changes and developments that have taken place since I first came there." But it becomes much more than the

story of Lakeview. In writing of her own ever-growing and changing awareness of the emotional complexities and motivations for behavior which bring about pregnancy out of wedlock, Mrs. Edlin traces the changes in society's attitude from the position that tolerance and sympathy for unmarried mothers encouraged immorality to our present acceptance that having a child often serves a mother a need which can be met only if she can be helped to know and have faith in herself.

Development of the theme that all behavior is purposive and that the conception of a child outside of marriage is motivated by many intricate emotional conflicts demanding adjustment and cure rather than the futility of condemnation; clear depiction of the early Lakeview policy favoring mothers keeping their children, to the extent that every effort was bent toward helping or persuading them to that end; liberal use of case illustrations to show gradual recognition of the problems and social disadvantages facing mothers today who try to keep their children, leading to today's conviction that "the trend toward adoption" is more constructive for the well-being of "the average" mother and her child—these and many more of today's concepts with which this book deals, contribute to its informative, educational value.

Perhaps its greatest contribution to today's social work literature is its value for lay use. The questions posed are those asked of our board members, staff members, Community Chest volunteers. With the conviction and authority that years of living with the subject brings, with the warmth and respect for individuals of a sensitive, humane person, this book can educate for better understanding, not in terms of scientific conclusions but in terms of the characteristics the author has seen as common to many girls.

This readable little volume makes a valuable contribution to a social work library.

ELINOR M. MULLEN

*Director of Casework Service, Ingleside, Buffalo,
New York*

CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL OPENINGS

Classified personnel ads are inserted at the rate of 10 cents per word; boxed ads at \$6.50 per inch; minimum insertion, \$2.50. Deadline for acceptance or cancellation is eighth of month prior to month of publication. Ads listing box numbers or otherwise not identifying the agency are accepted only when accompanied by statement that person presently holding the job knows that the ad is being placed.

CHILD WELFARE WORKERS: Immediate openings for child welfare workers with one year of graduate study. Salary range \$3276-\$3792. Write Merit System Council, State Office Bldg., Phoenix, Ariz.

PHOENIX, ARIZONA. Challenging opportunities immediately open in expanding family and children's agency in rapidly growing city of the Southwest. Salary, \$3600-\$5500, dependent on qualifications. Experienced workers in family, psychiatric or children's field. Write Mrs. Ella H. Perkins, Executive Secretary, Family Service of Phoenix, 702 E. Adams St., Phoenix, Ariz.

CASEWORKER, opening for professionally trained caseworker in family and children's agency. Staff of 10. Qualified supervision and psychiatric consultation. Salary to \$4980. Catholic Social Service, Thayer Bldg., 577 14th St., Oakland 12, Cal.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA. Professionally qualified caseworker in large multiple-service private agency with high standards of service, supervision and personnel practices, psychiatric consultation; agency is field placement for students (University of California School of Social Welfare). Opportunity for advancement. Salary to \$4362, depending on experience. Write Executive Director, Catholic Social Service, 1825 Mission St., San Francisco, Calif.

CASEWORKER, Catholic, professionally trained for progressive family & child welfare agency. 20 miles south of San Francisco. Salary \$3780-\$4704, can appoint at \$4704. Social Security & retirement benefits. 1 month vacation. Good supervision and psychiatric consultation. Apply Catholic Social Service, 112 N. San Mateo Dr., San Mateo, Calif.

CHILD WELFARE WORKERS for CWLA agency. Full professional training with experience substitution possible. Salary range \$3216-\$4392. Progressive personnel policies and expanding program; foster home placement, adoptions, relinquishment, counseling, protective services, etc. Fully qualified supervision and psychiatric consultation; psychological service. Write Personnel Officer, Denver Department of Welfare, 777 Cherokee St., Denver, Colo.

CASEWORKER in small private children's agency offering residential and foster home programs; services to unmarried parents; adoptions. Good supervision; psychiatric consultation; opportunity for professional growth. Requirements: Master's degree social work school; experience in adoption desirable. Woman. Salary \$3380-\$4560. Executive Director, Woodfield Children's Village, 1899 Stratfield Rd., Bridgeport 29, Conn.

CHILD WELFARE WORKER in local public welfare department to carry casework services and placement in subsidized foster homes of children referred to department and to work with unmarried mothers. Requirements: Master's degree social work school, or one year in school of social work plus one year social work experience. Salary \$3588-\$4212. Complete details by writing to Director of Personnel, Municipal Bldg., Hartford, Conn.

ADOPTION WORKER, Hartford; Child Placement Workers, New London and Torrington; Family Caseworker, Danbury; Caseworker, Residential Treatment Program, Hartford. Master's degree in social work, present salary all positions \$3200-\$4700, depending on experience. Beginning January 1956 all salaries \$3800-\$5300. Private nonsectarian, multiple-function agency. Small caseloads, excellent supervision, student training program, psychiatric consultation. C. Rollin Zane, Executive Director, Children's Services of Connecticut, 1680 Albany Ave., Hartford 5, Conn.

CASEWORKER. Opening in family-children's service agency for qualified caseworker. Salary range comparable with good agency practice. Information upon inquiry. For further information write Director, Catholic Social Service Bureau, 478 Orange St., New Haven 2, Conn.

WANTED: Caseworker. Catholic, for small family and child welfare agency. One year graduate training minimum. Opening about July. Salary \$3200. Write Director, Diocesan Bureau of Social Service, 42 Jay St., New London, Conn.

MALE GROUP WORKER for treatment home for emotionally disturbed children—12 boys and girls, 5-12 years of age. Plan recreation program, do direct work with children, supervise other recreation workers. \$3000-\$4200. Hillcrest Children's Center, 4124 Van Ness St., N. W., Washington 16, D. C.

CASEWORKER, senior or supervisory status, to develop and carry beginning foster placement service in multifunctional sectarian agency; homefinding, casework with children in placement, adoption, responsibility for board committee and certain community organization phases. Requirements: Graduation from school of social work and extensive experience in child placement practice. Opening salary up to \$5000, depending on experience. Albert Comanor, Executive Director, Jewish Social Service Bureau, 10 N. E. 3rd Ave., Miami 32, Fla.

CASEWORKER with graduate training and placement experience preferred for small institutional program, expanding foster home program, reasonable caseload. Write Miss Eva H. Byrd, Executive Director, 2560 Riverside Ave., Jacksonville, Fla.

Child Placement Worker professionally trained. Adoption, foster home and group care programs. Dependable and consistent supervision offered. Salary range \$3400-\$4400. Progressive and growing program. Good personnel practices. Write Mrs. Irene Shapaker, Director, Children's Services, Inc., 46 E. Broad St., Savannah, Ga.

CASEWORK SUPERVISOR. Works under director of adoption division, supervises 5 to 6 caseworkers. Requirements: MA degree social work school plus experience in family or children's agency. Salary \$5040-\$6420; appointment salary dependent on qualifications. Social Security. Write Miss Lois Wildy, Executive Director, Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society, 1122 N. Dearborn St., Chicago 10, Ill.